

Dear Members of the Education Committee,

Please support Senate Bill 948. Phasing in the ECS formula now will reduce funding for my town and I am asking you to support this bill.

Every year that we wait to phase in ECS funding is a year of a child's education lost. Children cannot wait for ECS dollars to be phased in over the next 7 years. They don't get to do their education over. We need full ECS funding now.

Connecticut may be among the top 5 states in the country for K-12 education, but we are doing a huge disservice to far too many of our students. The past year has made it clearer than ever that our schools and our children need to be funded fully, equitably, and immediately.

The racial funding gap in Connecticut is pervasive and systemic. School districts that have student populations that are majority BIPOC spend \$2,300 less per student compared to districts that have a majority white student population. By passing S.B. 948, you can help address these disparities, reduce the state's racial funding gap by 68%, and make sure students are at the center of the conversation about education funding.

When we look at infrastructure or the environment, we don't talk about just the stretch of highway in my little town, or how to keep just the portion of water of Candlewood Lake in Brookfield clean because that approach sounds ridiculous. Why, then, do we allow the conversation to continue unchallenged that the quality of the education we provide in Connecticut is based on the price of the house a child lives in? That **is** equally ridiculous and unfair. The success of each child, generation, any community, and our state as a whole is based on the investments we make in **all our** children.

Our students deserve to be funded based on what they **need** in order to be successful in and outside of the classroom. Our English Learners, students who are economically disadvantaged, and students navigating through their education in communities that experience concentrated poverty, all deserve additional funding at a rate that makes a real, tangible difference.

Our students, our schools, and our communities need real change, and we need it now.

We cannot talk about equity without putting action behind it. Equity starts with education and opportunities for **all** of our students. I'm counting on all of you to take every single student into account when you're making decisions about how to fund their education and to give all of our students a fighting chance to not only succeed but excel.

Thank you for your time, and I urge you to support S.B. 948.

Sincerely,

Laura Orban
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